

ROLE OF CAMPUS PLACEMENT AS DETERMINING FACTOR FOR SELECTION OF COLLEGE AMONG STUDENTS.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The major aim of the study was to identify the role of campus placement as determining factor for selection of college among students.

Methods: 150 college students across Arts, Commerce and Science currently pursuing their degree college course in Mumbai city where surveyed using structured questionnaire and convenient sampling technique. Frequency table and Chi square test were used for Hypothesis testing.

Findings: The study resulted into placement being a decision making factor for selecting colleges across streams. Placement as a decision-making factor for choice of college can be of use to Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) as this would result in strategy and policy development with regards to better placement cells, providing employability among undergraduates in turn helping towards brand building for colleges.

Key words:-campus placement, college selection, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Selecting a college is not an easy task. Students investigate several factors which influence them in choosing an institute for higher studies (**Prabakaran, Benat, Vadhani, & Nithya, -2018**)

Choosing a college for Higher education remains a major issue in a student's life. It is an important decision for all aspiring students to get into the best of college. As this decision affects their motivation to study and career prospects. A bad decision could lead to poor motivation, leading to poor academic scores and may end up with basic or no jobs. Colleges also need to understand what factors are considered by their stakeholders while deciding on selecting a college. These factors can then in turn be utilized for developing a good marketing strategy to build a brand image for the institute and attract quality students. According to **Rao et al. (2020)**, six variables are relevant while selecting an educational institution they are placement, reference, quality teaching, brand image of institution, personal factors and reputation of university. At the institute/university level, students also consider college timings, a resourceful library and co-curricular activities as factors for selecting college.

Whereas McDonnell (1995) suggested that students give importance to eight significant factors when they choose a college, which are academic reputation, infrastructure, geographical location, availability of scholarships, availability of desired majors, social atmosphere, student population, and admission rules/criteria. **Liên, Hòa, Anh (2015)** grouped the factors into 4 groups which are as follows; students' personal characteristics, characteristics of the university, influence from other people, and communicative effort from the university. According to **Subramaniya, Bharathy, & Rajapushpam (2018)** students consider lot of factors while selecting an institute such as placement activities, computer lab, suggestion from friends and family members, course offered, specialization offered, brand name of the institute, positive word of mouth and its location .

Özcan (2015) found quite similar results in respect of differences between genders. He reached the conclusion that females give more importance to the image of the institution and opportunities provided by the institution, whereas males give more importance to having friends and sports facilities in the campus.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cuhlova (2023) In her study titled “Students Decision Making About Higher Education” in **The Czech Republic** interviewed a sample of **6 students** and divided them into two groups. Group 1 - Students of public HEI and group 2 - Students of private HEI in the country. The research was done

using purposive sampling method and selected cases according to the rule of theoretical replication in the case studies. All the 6 students were from economics and management programs. Using 13 opened questions a semi structured deep interviews was conducted in 2021 & 2022 either face to face or using Google meet.

The author concluded that the main motive in deciding to go to university for group 1 is to improve their employability in the labour market and for the group 2 was as gaining an overview in the economic and managerial field, as they were studying a secondary school of a completely different specialisation. Further in terms of decision making approach, both groups use intuition in their decision making and do not use analytical methods to evaluate study options. Information sources of decision making for both the groups differ in terms of Group 1 representing public university students is more proactive by using university ranking, open days, student conferences. Group 2 works more with secondary sources of data that are published on the university website.

Md Mehedi Hasan, Sharmin Ara Chowdhury, Asif Ahamed (2023) conducted a similar study in **Bangladesh** titled “Exploring Social Influence Factors in University Choice Decisions Among College Students in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Study conducted on 30 college students from 5 different regions of Bangladesh suggested that universities should focus imparting high quality education which in turn will build a strong academic reputation and attract students. Various social and cultural factors that may influence students' decision-making, such as the location and atmosphere of the university, and the societal expectations regarding gender roles should be also considered by university. These finding will impact the HEI to a great extent by helping them to formulated policies that are attractive to students and help build a better brand image. Understanding the student’s decision making factors can help in better strategic development with regards to placement and policies that promote educational equity and access.

Gurung, S.K. et al. (2022) conducted a study “Institutional Determinants Of College Choice Decisions Among Business Students in **Nepal** .Survey was conducted on 385 conveniently sampled undergraduate and post graduate students of Pokhara University .Four institutional factors like college reputation, quality of educational facilities, cost and financial assistance, and employment opportunities had a significant factor in determining the selection of the college. This research helps colleges in marketing themselves to prospective students and understanding what drives individuals to pursue higher education by understanding the most important institutional factors. It also concluded that improving the quality of the college program, infrastructure, and services, affordable education, providing with financial aid and helping the graduates to be placed in the market will help colleges to get more enrolment from students.

Rajput, G. and Chouhan, P.S. (2021) study titled “Exploring The Factors Affecting Students’ Choice Of Higher Education Institutes in **India**: A Factor Analysis Approach. The study was conducted in **Indore** city using a structured questionnaire and judgemental sampling technique among 212 students. The research leads to a find of eight factors that influence the choice of HEI. These eight factors are as follows, past placement record and programme design, college timings and well-resourced library, co-curricular activities and alumni feedback, faculty expertise, benefits and expenditure, state-of-the-art, supportive staff, and additional facilities. The output of the study suggested that HEI should consider the various factors identified by the students while choosing the college for higher education. Service quality of an institute is an importance driver towards the success of the institute and it helps students in decision making process while selecting college.

Mishra, N., & Gupta, S. L. (2021) in their study titled “Factors And Influences Contributing To The College/University Selection: A Study Of Private Higher Education Institutes In **Oman**”. This study investigated different college and universities across Oman to find the factors responsible for student’s selection of college. The sample size was 300 First year Students in diploma and degree colleges were studied. This study was both exploratory and descriptive in nature. The study took into account unstructured and semi structured interviews of experts from higher education institutes and regulatory authorities. Secondary data was collected from published reports of Ministry of higher education and other agencies. Data was collected using questionnaire which was floated online and offline mode of students of three private universities and nine private colleges in Oman. The finding revealed that

students consider a variety of factors critical for HEI selection decision. These factors were location of college or university, reputation and image of the institute employment opportunity offered by the college ,foreign university tie-ups ,advertising in various media by institute , career goals and financial capacity were found to be the key factors influencing the students toward decision making on choice of HEI. The relationships between Fixed College Characteristics and HEI selection decision; College Efforts to Communicate and HEI selection decision; Student Characteristics and HEI selection decision, are found to be significant ($t > 1.96$ at $p < 0.05$). However it was found that there was no significant relationship between External Influence and HEI selection decision.

Sarkodie, N. A. Asare, A. and Asare, D. (2020) in their study conducted in **Ghana** investigated The Factors Influencing Students' Choice of Tertiary Education in Sunyani Technical University. 200 students from the academic batch of 2019-2020 were surveyed using convenience sampling technique. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected. Reputation of institution contributed as a major factor to influence respondent's choice of tertiary institution and followed by parental factors. The least factor was peer and media influence respectively. The study also considered factors like personal interest, career desire, employment opportunities, recognition of the programme and academic records as factors influencing students' choice of programme in tertiary education. Various challenges faced by the students with cost of the course infrastructural issues, tools and equipment's inadequacy. It is recommended that parents should always take time to discuss academic issues with their wards rather than imposing their opinions on them.

Al-Ali Mustafa, S., Sellami, A. L., Elmaghraby, E. A., & Al-Qassass, H. B. (2018) investigated various predictors of high school students' college and university choice decisions in their research paper "Determinants of College and University Choice for High-School Students in Qatar" They analysed a 2015 survey of 1427 participants using exploratory factor analysis to identify variables that affect student choice of HEI. Ordinal logistic regression was used to test independent variables (student's gender, nationality, parental education, and parental occupation) significant relation to the three extracted dimensions (dependent variables). The analysis revealed, to varying degrees, that demographic characteristics significantly predict a student's HEI choice. Findings of the study provided valuable insights for policymakers and educators in Qatar. The study resulted in understanding school counselling can played an important role in providing guidance for students, beginning at the preparatory school level. Special consideration is on parents themselves having lower education levels and place inadequate emphasis on their children's further education. Student counselling would need to combine parental involvement in children's plans regarding how and when to make their choices towards HEI.

İlğan, A., Ataman, O., & Yurdunkulu, A. (n.d.)(2018). study titled "Factors Affecting University Choice: A Study on University Freshman Students" conducted in 2 different universities comprising of 630 freshman students in the North West part of **Turkey**. Descriptive survey questionnaire was designed to understand the various factors that affect the choice and preference of the freshman towards choosing university. It was found that the most important factors affecting students' preferences were 'future expectation for career' and 'quality and popularity of education given by universities' dimensions, while the least effective dimension was 'familiarities of cities and having familiars in cities'. It was found that students who had 'low level' social economic status give less importance to 'quality and popularity of education given by universities' than any other students. It was concluded that high school graduate student prefer having a job and career for future, besides the quality perceptions of the universities will be important for them. Among developing country like Turkey students are expecting a hopeful future, a career and a job ownership from the education imparted to them.

Krezel and Krezel (2017) in their of HEI choice models, summarized that a set of social factors that influence a student's HEI choice, which fell into three broad types of influences: 1. Student-related characteristics; 2. Institutional factors; and 3. Greater social environment, i.e. the family and peers.

Wiese, Heerden and Jordaan (2010) -in their study conducted at six South African Universities with 1241 participants- found that when students choose a college, quality of teaching and employment prospects are the most important and the second most important factors respectively.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Majority of the study on factors influencing selection of college among students, studied various factors taken into consideration while selecting a college very few even considered placement as a factor. This research paper exclusively studies the placement as a factor and how a placement cell of college help in building the brand image of the institute.

4. OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

4.1 Objective

1. To understand if a good college placement is a criterion for selecting college among students.
2. To understand that if colleges with good placement cell have better brand image among other educational institute

4.2 Research Framework



5. HYPOTHESIS

H01- There is no significant relation between gender and placement a factor while selecting college

H11- There is a significant relation between gender and placement a factor while selecting college

H02- There is no significant difference between having placement cell in the college and opinion of students about having good placement cell has better brand image than other colleges.

H12- There is a significant difference between having placement cell in the college and opinion of students about having good placement cell has better brand image than other colleges.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Type of Research

In order to study the objective of the study and to test the stated hypotheses, descriptive research approach is followed in this study.

6.2 Sampling Size and Sampling method

150 degree college students across Mumbai city were studied using convenient sampling method for collection of data.

6.3 Type and Source of Data

For the study primary data was collected through structured questionnaire using Google form. Questions were formed using Closed ended questions and 5 point Likert scale.

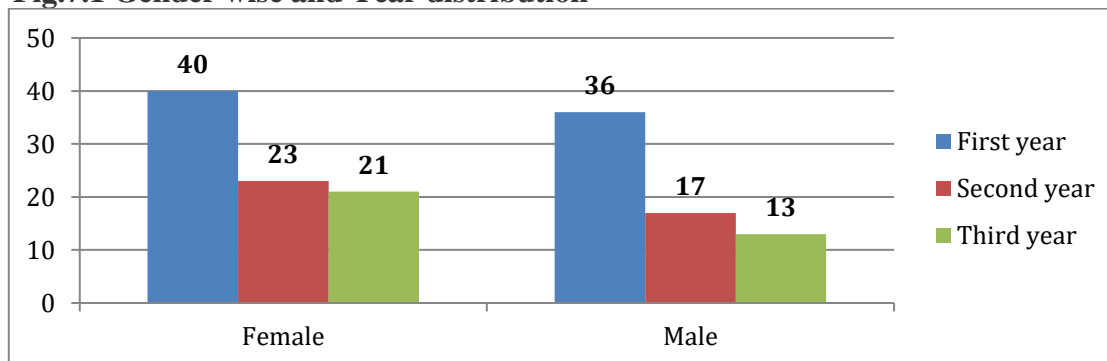
6.4 Statistical tool used

After coding and validating, the responses were analysed using statistical tools like frequencies and Chi square test is used to test the hypotheses. Graphs are used for easy interpretations of data.

7. DATA ANALYSIS and FINDING OF THE STUDY

Sample size of 150 degree college students from Metro city of Mumbai were surveyed to understand the influence of placement as a determining factor while selecting college by students. The survey comprised of 56% females and 44% of male.

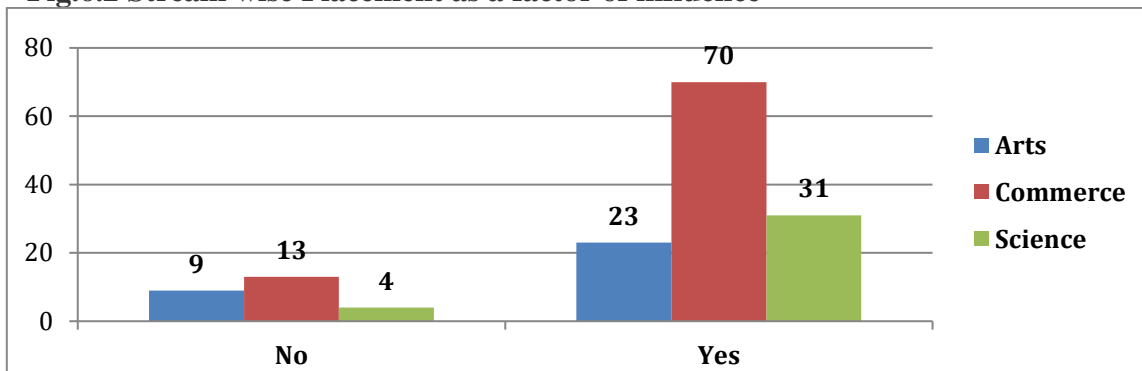
Fig.7.1 Gender wise and Year distribution



Source Primary data

The above graph shows a gender wise distribution among 3 years.50.7% of students are from First year with 40 females and 36 males.26.7% of students are from Second year with 23 females and 17 males and 22.7% students are from the Third year with 21 females and 13 males.

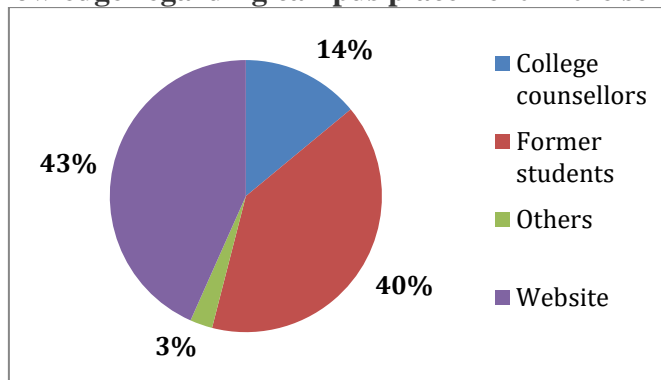
Fig.6.2 Stream wise Placement as a factor of influence



Source Primary data

The graph states out of the total 150 students 124 students selected their college on basis of campus placement .Of which 70 students were from commerce,31 students from Science and 23 students were from Arts stream.26 students had considered other factors for college selection

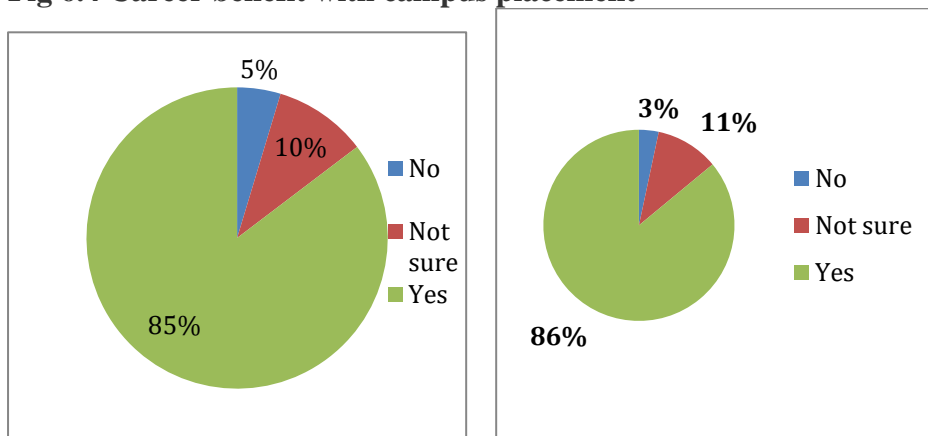
Fig.6.3 Source of knowledge regarding campus placement in the selected college



Source Primary data

43% of the students got to know about the campus placement through college Website, whereas 40% got to know through the Alumni’s of the college and 14% through college counsellors and rest had miscellaneous unmentioned sources.

Fig 6.4 Career benefit with campus placement

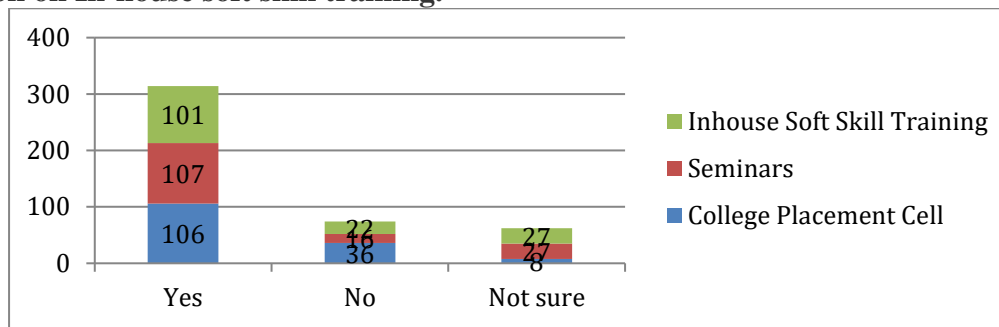


Source Primary data

Source Primary data

Fig 6.3 and 6.4 show a close outcome. 85% of college students believe campus placement should be there at undergraduate level and 86% agree that campus placement is a stepping stone to their career path.

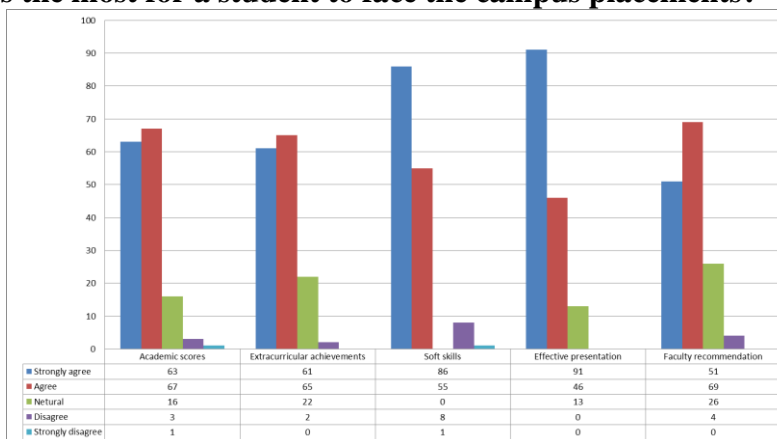
Fig 6.5 Students awareness regarding College placement cell, Seminars conducted in college and Opinion on In-house soft skill training.



Source Primary Data

3 close ended questions from the questionnaire were analysed which gave a relatively narrow outcome in terms of difference since 106 students were aware of the college placement cell, 107 said they were aware of the seminars conducted by the placement cell and 101 students agreed that in-house soft skill training were important.

Fig. 6.6 What helps the most for a student to face the campus placements?



Source: Primary Data

From above table it can be concluded that most of the students opt for the effective presentation being the most helpful to face the campus placements followed by soft skills.

7. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H₀ = There is no significant difference between gender and factors considered while selecting college

Factors considered while selecting college	Gender	Very important	Important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Not important
Academic Score	Female	33	37	10	3	1
	Male	24	30	9	3	0
Infrastructure	Female	24	31	20	4	5
	Male	19	24	19	4	0
Campus Placement	Female	51	24	5	4	0
	Male	41	16	7	2	0
Popularity of College	Female	27	35	17	3	2
	Male	16	27	19	4	0
Teaching staff	Female	54	25	4	0	1
	Male	35	28	2	1	0
Extracurricular activities	Female	37	36	7	2	2
	Male	31	20	10	5	0

Peer pressure	Female	16	23	27	8	10
	Male	9	20	22	6	9

Frequency is calculated and it shows 41 male students opting for campus placement being a more important factor for them while selecting college, whereas 54 female students opting that teaching staff is more important factor for them while selecting college. i.e. Male students prefer campus placement as an important factor as compared to female students.

This outcome seconds Wiese, Heerden and Jordaan (2010) study that females give more importance to quality of teaching than males do.

H_0 = There is no significant difference between having placement cell in the college and opinion of students about having good placement cell has better brand image than other colleges.

Chi-square Contingency Table Test for Independence

		No	Not Aware	Yes	Total
No	Observed	2	3	3	8
	Expected	0.43	1.92	5.65	8.00
	% of chisq	51.5%	5.4%	11.1%	68.0%
Not aware	Observed	2	7	12	21
	Expected	1.12	5.04	14.84	21.00
	% of chisq	6.1%	6.8%	4.8%	17.7%
Yes	Observed	4	26	91	121
	Expected	6.45	29.04	85.51	121.00
	% of chisq	8.3%	2.8%	3.1%	14.2%
Total	Observed	8	36	106	150
	Expected	8.00	36.00	106.00	150.00
	% of chisq	66.0%	15.0%	19.0%	100.0%

11.26	chi-square
4	df
.0238	p-value

The chi- square test was applied and the results shows that the chi- square value is 11.26 and p value = 0.0238, which is less than 0.05, therefore, H_0 is rejected which means that there is significant difference between having placement cell in the college and opinion of students about having good placement cell has better brand image than other colleges. **i.e. those students who are having placement cell in their college feel good placement cell has better brand image than other colleges.**

8. LIMITATION OF STUDY

This study was conducted in Mumbai city hence the result cannot be universally applied, other demographic may have different factors influencing them towards choice of college. The study has taken all the 3 streams as whole if we separate every stream as per their specialisation the result would vary.

9. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

9.1 CONCLUSION

This research exclusively studied placement as a factor which influenced the students towards their choice of college. Finding of the study states that students across streams agree placement as an

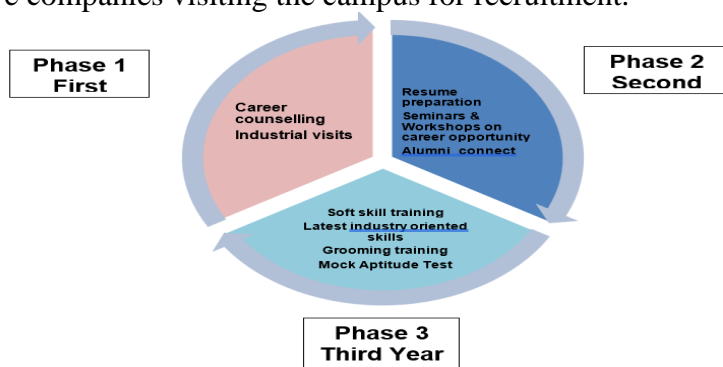
important criteria for selecting the college. It may not be wrong if it is said that today's students are more aware and also do their selection of college on based on their own research like browsing through college websites or by speaking with former students regarding the college placement.

This shows that employability factor is one of the key criteria considered before entering the degree college. Students are also aware about the college placement and the seminars conducted by them. They understand training and grooming for the campus placement is an important factor which enables them to face the campus interview more effectively.

The alternative hypothesis which studied a positive relationship between having a good placement cell in college has better brand image than other colleges without an efficient placement cell. Keeping all these aspects into considerations colleges and HEI should work towards building a better placement cell. Campus placement with higher percentage of employability not only brings fame to the institute among students but also works as a marketing strategy towards building good brand image among other competitive institutes.

9.2 SUGGESTIONS

Branding is a powerful tool and in today's era it act more important and beneficial for HEI's than before. With increasing competition, the higher education institutes need to maintain a good brand image to be in the race. Placement cell & Training play an important role, and help in improving and building a good brand image among present students. This in turn will increase enrolment of students as well as prospective companies visiting the campus for recruitment.



The above diagram exhibits the suggestion to Higher Education Institutes, a need for building better placement cells. As illustrated, the way in which this can be adapted is for colleges to divide the entire process year-wise thereby bi-furcating it into 3 phases. Each phase becomes a stepping stone to the next phase. This gradual progression would then prepare students to be well versed and also ready to step in to an area of their choice which is then any desired organization within the corporate world. Therefore it would be befitting and prudent to say that the future of the college's lies in the very hands of their stakeholder's satisfaction which in turn leads to improved brand image and enhancing their reputation amongst the set of competing institutions.

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